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GOVERNANCE TRANSFORMED



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Viksit Bharat @2047

Governance Transformed

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Conclusion

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The 20 essays enclosed within the covers of this volume offer a panoramic view of certain dimensions of the Indian politico-socio-economic scenario. By the very nature of the essays, this view cannot be complete or comprehensive; certainly, there is much that remains unsaid. Any country on the trajectory of growth is perpetually a work in progress. And in this journey, it has to constantly adapt to national and international changes if it seeks to sustain that growth over the long term. Indeed, in this year of 2025, when we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution and the formation of the Republic of India, we are at a vantage point in history to assess the path hitherto travelled and chart out the direction of the road ahead.

Presently, in the world around us, there are arenas of international conflict that threaten to disturb world peace. There is a clear and present danger that the other countries of the world may get sucked into the conflict. International economics is displaying volatility that we must learn to manage and steer clear of. The change of leadership in the United States presents a picture of uncertainty that may spread to areas as yet unknown. There are old and new dangers in the neighbourhood

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of our country that we have to contend with. Within the country too, there are severe challenges that persist despite all attempts being made to resolve them. Religion, caste, gender, and socio-economic discriminations continue to create divisions within the population, and fissiparous tendencies do threaten our integrity. Though we experience high rates of economic growth, the burgeoning population and issues of inequality dampen the natural forward trajectory of our country. It is through all these challenges that we have to find the path ahead.

If we search for some of the challenges that lie in our way, we can certainly identify some of them. Climate change will affect our development in ways that we cannot predict today. Artificial intelligence is an unknown force that will mutate the manner in which we progress ahead. There are challenges of sustainability, employment, reasonable rates of growth, redistribution of wealth, removal of inequality, and many other dangers that lie in our path. The manner in which we address these issues and move ahead, while at the same time ensuring social justice, better health, education, and the rule of law, will determine how we reach our goals by the year 2047, when our country turns a century old.

Our distinguished writers who have contributed to this volume have examined in great detail the issues pertaining to their respective sectors. A historical background of the evolution of our Constitution is the first in this collection of essays. In another chapter, challenges in building and sustaining a thriving democracy in the future have been highlighted. Along with this, questions related to democratic decentralisation and ways to strengthen the participation of people in the governance of our country at the grassroots level have also been looked at. Again, in agriculture, although we have attained self-sufficiency in food, related questions about providing a remunerative price to the farmers, diversifying our crops, enhancing the value of finished products, and ensuring that productivity and area under cultivation increase in the years to come have been examined. Serious issues regarding

building social capital through gender inclusion, as well as issues related to social justice and affirmative action, have also been examined in some depth. The role of the civil service as a permanent institution in our country's administrative structure and its empowerment to ensure that the delivery of services takes place up to the last mile are also issues that this volume has delved into in some depth. Industrialisation and infrastructure development also find their place in this volume, as does the expansion of digital public infrastructure which has a direct impact on providing public goods to the people without harassment. Higher education and the expansion of medical facilities have also been closely examined in this volume.

What lies ahead for our country? At least in the short run of the next 25 years, we can attempt to make a list of our priorities. First and foremost, it is clear that we have to protect our territorial integrity from the envious glances of our geographical neighbours. This would be one of the important areas which the country would be attempting to secure in the days lying ahead. Strategic partnerships with friendly nations, along with developing economic ties internationally, are perhaps the only ways to ensure that the unity and integrity of our country is preserved from external forces. Strengthening our military resources is a natural corollary of the same.

On the other hand, we have to ensure that all the citizens of the country are provided with the necessary food security to ensure their long-term well-being. India became self-sufficient in food grains a long time ago. However, the distribution of its food to all deserving people of the country is a goal that we are yet to achieve. Fortunately, the Food Security Act, along with annual bumper food grain production, has ensured that people living below the poverty line do not go to sleep hungry. The nutritional status of the children of our country is a genuine concern. Despite several decades of the Integrated Child Development Scheme, substantial numbers of children still need to be protected to ensure their healthy growth.

About 60% of our population is dependent on agricultural and allied activities, though they provide only about a 17% share in our GDP. Many measures have been undertaken over the last decades to ensure a remunerative price for the crops produced by our agriculturists. Ensuring the market for their produce, diversifying their crops, and aiming for doubling their income within a reasonable period of time are some of the major concerns that the government would have to take up in real earnestness. Large swathes of our population have been lifted above the poverty line. Those who remain are also to be uplifted as early as possible.

Ensuring that there is sufficient fund flow for the development of the country's infrastructure is yet another goal of our economy. Indeed, there has been significant progress in the expansion of the road and air network in the subcontinent. This pace has to be kept up in the coming years as well, to ensure that industrial development and growth of the manufacturing sector reach sufficiently high levels so as to employ large numbers of our youth. It cannot be denied that unemployment remains one of the crucial factors that is hampering economic growth and alleviation of poverty. This has to become one of the high priorities for the country in the days ahead.

We are fortunate that we have technical manpower matching the best anywhere in the world. Our IT and software engineers are much in demand across the planet. The recent "Make in India" campaign is ensuring that the import of technical know-how and manpower is gradually decreased until we become fully self-sufficient as we go along. That we can become international leaders in this sector of the economy is an objective that we need to follow up with utmost diligence and determination.

India watchers have also been emphasising the fact that the country has a long way to go in areas of human and social development such as education, universal health, skill development, empowerment of women, social justice, etc. A

concerted attempt in these areas would surely provide satisfying rewards in the immediate future. Certain states have already taken adequate measures in this regard and are moving ahead insofar as human development is concerned. On the other hand, there are some states where the parameters of human and social development are still low. This disparity is likely to cause interregional imbalances that a country like ours cannot afford. The all-round development of all states of the country, across the length and breadth of the subcontinent, is therefore of primary importance. The ultimate objective is that human potential must be achieved to the maximum extent possible, as this in turn will galvanise the growth of our country in the years to come. There are crimes and atrocities committed against the disadvantaged sections of our population, as well as our vulnerable women population, that should not be allowed to continue. The Preamble of our Constitution emphasises the paramount importance of liberty, equality, and fraternity under the umbrella of justice. Each one of us should strive to realise the dreams of our founding fathers, so that we become a Ram Rajya where all people are equal and achieve their full potential.

This volume of essays is dedicated to the 75th anniversary of our country becoming a Republic on January 26, 2025. In this regard, we have reviewed developments in various sectors of the economy through the lens of these essays. We can but try to look into the crystal ball regarding what to expect in, say, the next quarter of a century. If we focus our attention on some of the issues mentioned above and try to address them in the best manner possible, keeping the interest of all our diverse peoples in mind, then there can be no doubt that we will soon stand in the ranks of the most advanced countries of the world. “Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”